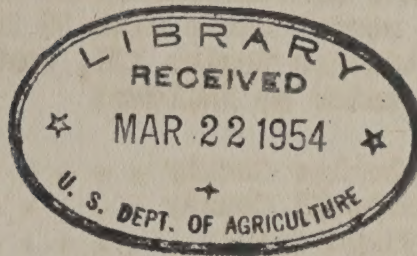


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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Bureau of Agricultural Economics



THE JOHN DOE FAMILY AND HOW THEY LIVED
Reporting Study of 38 Tenant-Purchase Clients in 1939

By

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FOREWORD

This study is one of a series that was undertaken by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics in an attempt to analyze various aspects of family living of Farm Security clients as revealed by an analysis of record books kept by these clients. This report deals with 38 Tenant-Purchase families in the Farm Security Administration Region XII, during the calendar year 1939. These families were located as follows:

Texas	- Wheeler County	10 families
	Randall County	4 "
	Floyd County	3 "
	Hansford County	2 "
New Mexico	- Roosevelt County	7 "
	Eddy County	4 "
Colorado	- Bent County	5 "
Kansas	- Wallace County	2 "
Oklahoma	- Texas County	1 "

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Families acquiring farms under the provisions of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act are required to keep farm and home record books. At the end of the calendar year 1939, approximately 60 farm families in the FSA Region XII had acquired these farms, but several of these were not in the program for the entire year. A study was made of the farm and home record books kept by 38 of these families.

This report of 38 families, which are representative of the entire group, might be considered as establishing a bench mark against which future progress of Tenant-Purchase families may be measured. The results are presented in terms of the John Doe family, which represents the average in regard to certain characteristics. In this way it is hoped that the material will be of use to farm and home supervisors who can recognize in this family the families they deal with and to farmers who are participating in the Tenant-Purchase program and who perhaps will want to use the John Doe family as a measurement with which to estimate their own progress.

In terms of many of the family characteristics, the "average" is a fairly good one when different types of averages are compared. For example: The mean size of farm is 371 acres, the median is 320 acres, and the mode 320 acres; mean size of family is 4.39, and median and modal sizes both 4; as to years of formal schooling, the three figures for husbands are 9, 9, and 8, respectively, and for wives 10, 10, and 8, respectively. The mean and median ages of operators are identical.

Introducing the John Doe Family

John Doe, who was selected in 1939 by a county committee of three farmers as one who might well own a farm under the Bankhead-Jones Act, was a white, 34 year-old married man with two children. He differed from many of his brother Tenant-Purchase borrowers in age and number of children. His brothers were from 24 to 46 years of age, one-half being younger than John Doe and one-half older; some of them were childless in 1939, and one had six children.

Mary Doe had more formal schooling than her husband; she had completed 10 years, whereas he had completed 9 years. Wives in the other families had had from 7 to 16 years of schooling, and husbands from 5 to 15 years.

The John Doe family lived on a farm somewhere in the FSA Region already described. They operated about one-half section of land. This was not true of all the Tenant-Purchase borrowers, for some in Bent County, Colo., and in Eddy County, N. Mex., operated 80 acres of land each, while in Hansford County in the TexasPanhandle one operated as many as 1,600 acres.

Immediately before coming into the Tenant-Purchase program, John Doe had been a renter on shares, with 15 years of farming experience behind him, as had all the rest of the 38 but two--one of these had been a sharecropper and the other a farm laborer. The farming experience of the lot ranged from 6 to 31 years.

The housing conditions of the Doe family and their physical surroundings generally were greatly improved after the father became a Tenant-Purchase borrower (fig. 1 and 2). The family now had indoor toilet facilities, a kitchen sink, and running water. Prospects of having a telephone were good, although the availability of electricity was still a problem.

Table 1 gives a summary of the facilities of 35 of the families before and after they became Tenant-Purchase borrowers, and makes evident the general improvement in regard to every item.

Table 1. - Housing facilities before and after coming into the Tenant-Purchase program; 35 families, 1939

Facility	: Number of families		: Families still
	: (Before)	: (After)	
Running water	8	30	5
Kitchen sink	13	31	4
Indoor toilet	1	18	17
Electricity	4	7	28
Telephone	9	15	20

Where did the John Doe family get its 1939 money?

Operating under the Tenant-Purchase program, the John Doe family got its living in various ways--perhaps from sales of crops, livestock, and livestock products; from Government and private loans; from Government subsidies; from miscellaneous employment; and from other sources such as oil leases and inheritances. Table 2 indicates that of the family's gross income which amounted to \$3,435, one-half came from sales of crops, livestock, and livestock products.

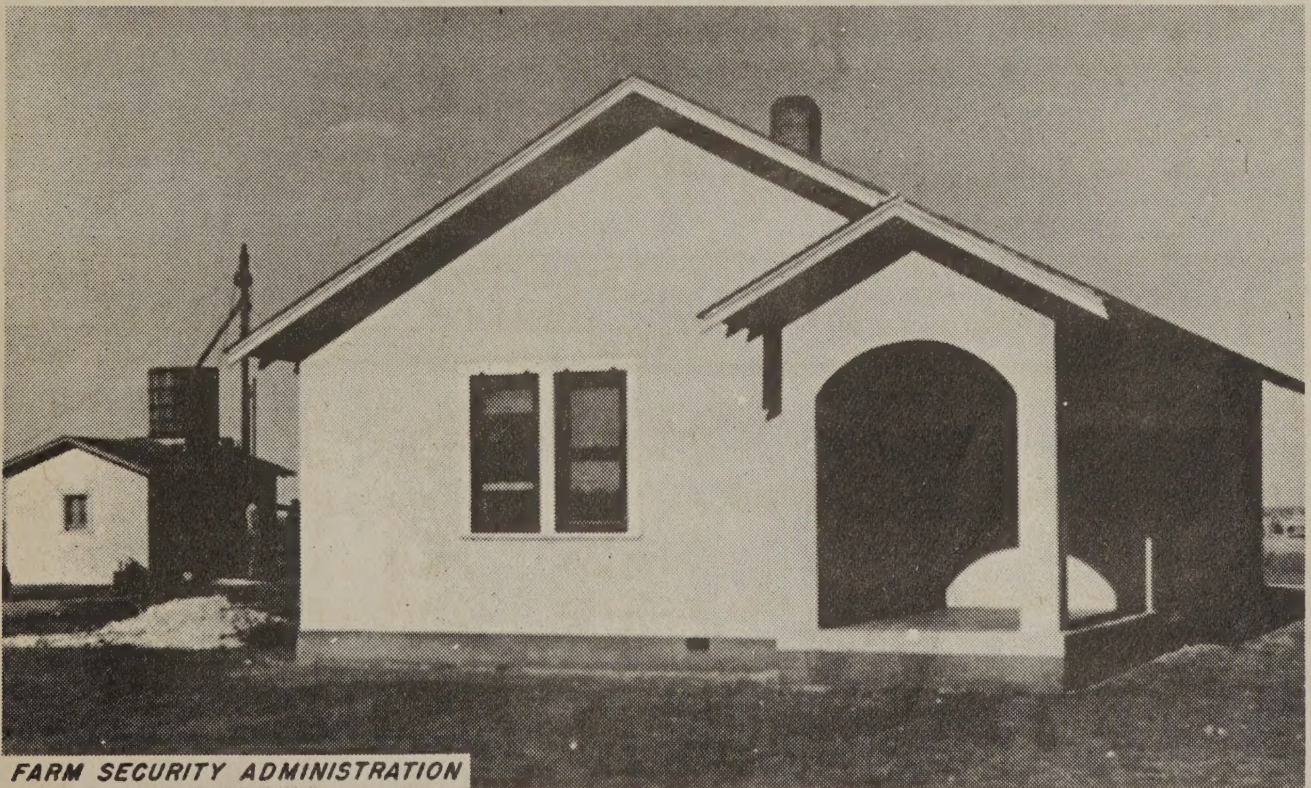
Table 2. - Where John Doe's money came from

Source	: Amount		: Percent of
	: \$: \$	
Crops	927		27.0
Livestock and livestock products	793		23.2
FSA loans	767		22.3
AAA and parity	329		15.4
Private loans	185		5.4
Miscellaneous employment	116		3.4
Oil leases; inheritances, etc.	115		3.3
Total	\$3,435		100.0



FARM SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Fig.1. ONE OF THE MANY HOUSES IN WHICH THE JOHN DOE FAMILY LIVED AS SHARE RENTERS



FARM SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Fig.2. JOHN DOE AND FAMILY NOW OWN THIS HOME AS WELL AS THE FARM ON WHICH IT STANDS, ACQUIRED UNDER THE BANKHEAD - JONES FARM TENANT ACT

John Doe supplemented his cash income with outside work that brought in \$116, but the thought or the chance to do this did not come to him alone -- 27 other Tenant-Purchase borrowers benefited from outside work. (Table 2)

Where the money went

A characteristic of this family which sets it off from most other families in the community is that Mr. and Mrs. Doe not only keep farm and home records but plan farm and home activities a year in advance. They are proud of their achievements in planning--of having learned a new skill of real value. Planning means to the John Does a goal to shoot at, within the limits outlined by the farming enterprise. As the family becomes more adept in this new-found technique, planning becomes less of a guessing spree and more of an instrument with which to estimate the vagaries of the home and farm business.

Home production of foods is an essential part of planning for the Doe family. But experience in subsistence planning enables the John Does to estimate the quantity of food the family may be expected to buy, hence how much money the family will need during the year for this item of cash expenditure.

In making their home plans for 1939, John and Mary Doe estimated that they would spend about \$508. They actually spent \$635, or about \$127 more than they had planned. But they had learned to plan within conservative limits. Then, too, as there was a greater net income than expected, they felt free to provide better for their family. This, in general, was the position in which most of the other Tenant-Purchase borrowers found themselves. The family's actual and anticipated expenditures for various items are shown in table 3 and in figure 3.

Table 3. - Comparison of the actual and anticipated family living expenditures of the John Doe family, and percent items are of the total, 1939

Items	Expenditures		Expenditures	
	(dollars)		(percent of total)	
	Actual	Anticipated	Actual	Anticipated
Food	191.79	129.43	30	26
Clothing	95.21	93.01	15	18
Housing, furnishings, and equipment	74.69	67.83	12	13
Household operation	58.37	68.05	9	13
Medical care	55.60	29.45	9	6
Education, recreation, church, etc.	52.65	42.93	8	8
Insurance	42.31	35.85	7	7
Miscellaneous	38.86	18.29	6	4
Personal	25.52	22.86	4	5
Total	635.00	507.70	100	100

The actual and the anticipated expenditures for clothing and personal expenses were about the same. The greatest differences were in the items food,

medical care, and miscellaneous, all of which were greater than expected; medical care took almost twice as much as estimated.

The family does not make plans concerning the probable monthly expenditure for home living, but it is interesting to examine the general direction of these expenditures, which is shown in table 4. Considerable rise is shown in cash expenditures during the last 4 months of the year, as cash receipts rise and Government payments are received.

Table 4. - Family-living expenditures of the Does by months and monthly percentage of yearly total, 1939

Month	Expenditures	
	(Dollars)	(Percent)
January	47.51	7
February	40.86	6
March	42.42	7
April	46.78	7
May	42.75	7
June	38.23	6
July	50.18	8
August	43.00	7
September	62.48	10
October	67.29	11
November	68.73	11
December	84.77	13
Year	635.00	100

Monthly expenditures, by items, are shown in figure 4, but it should be pointed out that the chart does not tell the whole story, particularly in the case of medical care--an item that is apt to exhibit extreme fluctuations from month to month. To meet this threat, the Farm Security Administration has inaugurated a cooperative medical program on an experimental basis in many counties.

Subsistence of the family

Home production of food was a large item in the plans of John and Mary Doe. They had planned to produce for home use about 2,000 quarts of milk for all purposes (drinking, cooking, cream, butter, and cheese), about 650 pounds of dressed meat, about 160 dozens of eggs, nearly 250 pounds of potatoes, and approximately 1,500 pounds of fruits and vegetables, some of which were to be canned. In general, the family fared better than they had planned, as may be seen by inspecting table 5. Milk, meat, fruits and vegetables, and eggs were important in that order, in terms of cash value.

COMPARISON OF ACTUAL AND ANTICIPATED EXPENDITURES
OF THE JOHN DOE FAMILY IN 1939

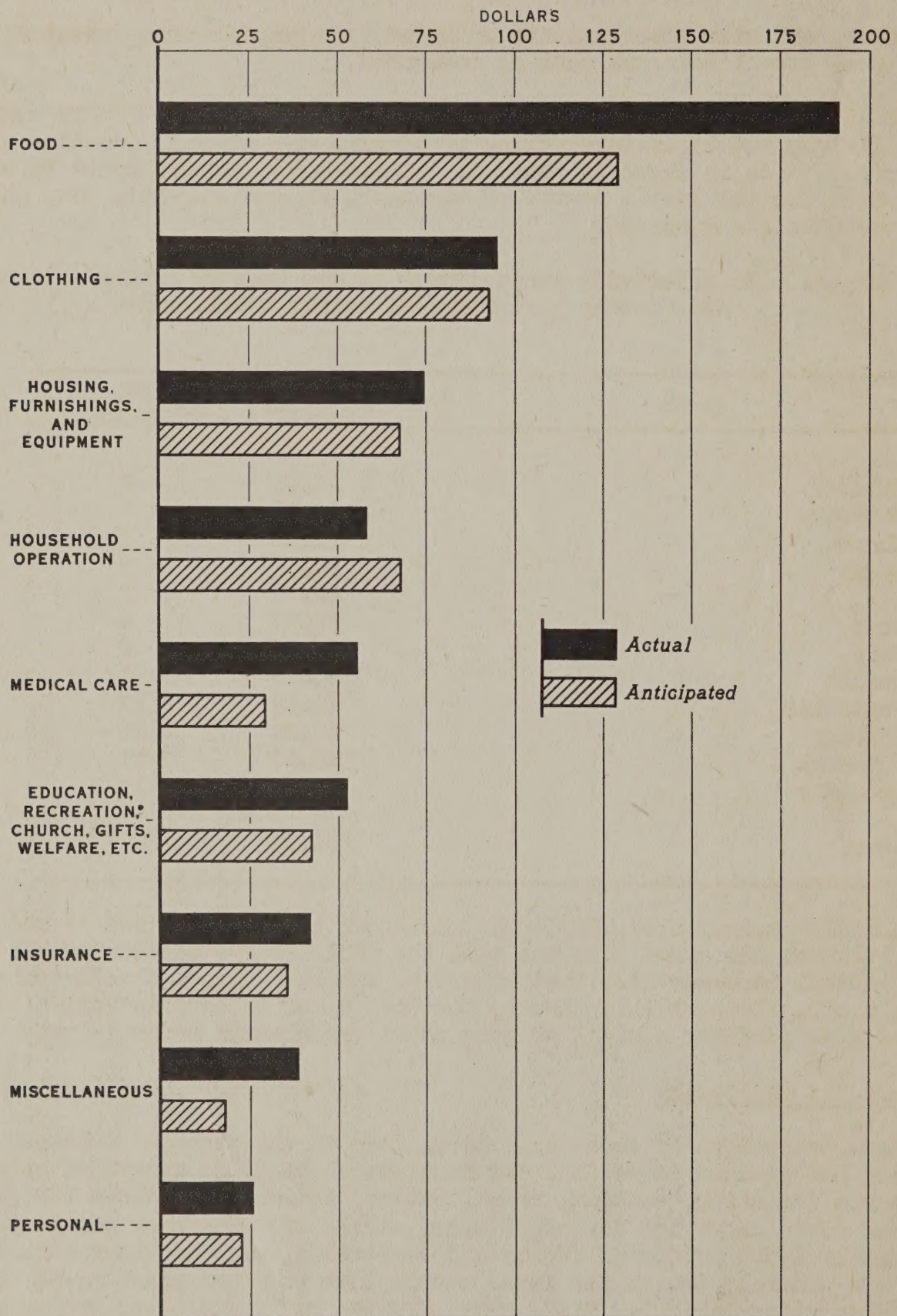


FIGURE 3

AMOUNT OF CASH THE JOHN DOE FAMILY SPENT EACH MONTH FOR VARIOUS FAMILY LIVING ITEMS IN 1939



FIGURE 4

Table 5. - Home-produced foods on the John Doe farm, 1939

Food	Quantity			Value (dollars)	
	:Actual:	Anticipated:	Difference:	Actual:	Anticipated*
Milk equivalent . . . qts.:	3,133	2,137	996	103.18	70.31
Meat lbs.:	681	648	33	92.05	87.61
Eggs doz.:	151	161	- 10	22.01	23.47
Potatoes lbs.:	34	232	- 198	.60	4.08
Fruits and vegetables, lbs.:	1,568	1,507	61	51.06	49.12
Other foods	**	**	**	4.75	3.30
Total				273.65	237.90

* The computed farm value had production been as anticipated.

** Quantities not shown because given in noncomparable terms; for example, gallons, pounds, etc.

The home production of fruits and vegetables is of great significance in a region where successful home gardens are the exception rather than the rule. The John Doe family had been encouraged to buy a pressure cooker. They put up 217 quarts of garden produce for later use. Not all Tenant-Purchase borrowers did as much canning, but some others did more.

In addition to food, the family produced \$4.50 worth of corn cobs. . . . The total value of subsistence then (omitting rent for use of dwelling) was \$278 or 44 percent of the total cash expenditures for family living. Had the home-produced food been computed at retail prices, the cash value would have been considerably higher.

Governmental aid in this instance spelled the difference between a net income large enough to provide for a relatively high plane of living, and economic insecurity and depressed family living. For example, the difference between the total receipts of \$3,435 and the total farm expenses of \$2,590 (including the repayment of loans) left a net income of \$845 which included \$529 of Government subsidy. The Doe family spent \$635 for family living and was able to lay aside \$210 for a rainy day or for expanding the farm business. Had the Government subsidy (here in the form of AAA and parity payments) not been forthcoming, the Does would have had a net income of only about \$300, or about one-half the amount they spent for modest family living. On the other hand, governmental subsidy might not have been necessary to maintain the Doe level of living if debt payments had not been necessary.

Conclusions regarding progress of the 38 families

In general, Tenant-Purchase families planned to produce, and actually did produce, a large part of their food. But in spite of the high degree of self-sufficiency, indicated by this large production, the cash income from the farm was not enough to provide a decent family living without the benefit of some form of Government subsidy. In fact, without it the cash income would have been only one-half the amount required for reasonably satisfactory family living. It should be remembered that many Tenant-Purchase families had a smaller net income than the Doe family. To such families Government subsidies meant the difference between a rather meager living and a mere subsistence.

Tenant-Purchase families fared better than they had expected. Careful planning and an effort to follow the plans, Government subsidy, cooperative supervision by county farm and home supervisors, and home production of large quantities of foods were important reasons. Pride of achievement and ownership may well be found to give the strength to attack the uncertainties of the future with greater determination.

A P P E N D I X

Glossary of terms used for family living expenses:

Food: Includes all food purchased and meals away from home.

Clothing: Includes all clothing bought, all ready-made clothes, materials for homemade clothing, labor paid for sewing, shoe repairing, dry cleaning and dyeing, and gifts of clothing bought by one member for another in the family.

Housing, furnishings, and equipment: Includes new house or additions to house, repairs, improvements, shrubbery and landscaping, and furnishings and equipment purchased.

Household operations: Includes cleaning, laundry, sewing supplies, matches, stationery, postage, fuel, electricity, ice, and family share of the telephone.

Medical care: Includes expenses for dentist, doctor, nurse, hospital, medical supplies, eyeglasses, and health association dues.

Education, recreation, church, etc.: Includes school supplies, tuition and fees, newspapers, magazines, books, concerts, shows, lectures, plays, ball games, etc.; cash donations for church, and welfare; and gifts outside the family.

Insurance: Includes insurance premiums paid, other than automobile insurance.

Personal: Includes expenses for personal services and equipment such as barber, beauty shop, cosmetics, toilet articles, cigarettes, and tobacco.

Cash value of home-produced foods: Estimated as follows: Milk, 3.29 cents per quart; meat, 13.52 cents per pound; eggs, 14.58 cents per dozen; potatoes, 1.76 cents per pound; fruits and vegetables, 3.26 cents per pound which includes canned vegetables at a set price of 10 cents a quart and canned fruits at 15 cents a quart. One canned quart was equivalent to two and one-half pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables.

Table to accompany figure 4. - Amounts spent for various items, by months

Month:	Food	Clothing	Housing :furnish-ings and equipment:	House- hold : opera- tion :	Other: care	Medical: recreation: church	Education : etc.	Personal:	Total
Jan.	\$14.34	\$ 4.63	\$ 5.28	\$5.13	\$ 9.32	\$ 2.98	\$ 4.33	\$ 1.50	\$ 47.51
Feb.	12.83	5.35	7.47	5.47	3.21	1.97	2.61	1.95	40.86
Mar.	16.07	5.36	3.60	4.65	4.56	4.11	2.20	1.87	42.42
Apr.	14.68	8.92	2.70	3.58	5.54	7.31	2.35	1.70	46.78
May	15.27	6.13	3.47	3.79	5.63	1.93	4.75	1.78	42.75
June	15.76	5.43	2.11	3.78	5.03	1.60	2.32	2.20	38.23
July	19.38	6.58	4.71	3.28	5.24	4.63	3.14	3.22	50.18
Aug.	15.80	4.61	5.06	3.35	2.54	7.37	2.64	1.63	43.00
Sept.	17.83	11.09	6.93	5.53	9.93	4.30	4.76	2.11	62.48
Oct.	18.55	11.50	8.45	5.54	8.96	8.24	4.58	1.47	67.29
Nov.	14.07	11.40	15.98	5.70	9.33	5.45	4.76	2.04	68.73
Dec.	17.21	14.21	8.93	8.57	11.88	5.71	14.21	4.05	84.77
Total	191.79	95.21	74.69	58.37	81.17	55.60	52.65	25.52	635.00

Table to accompany figure 4. - Amounts spent for various items, by months
(Cumulative total)

Month:	Food	Clothing	Housing :furnish-ings and equipment:	House- hold : opera- tion :	Other: care	Medical: recreation: church	Education : etc.	Personal:	Total
Jan.	\$14.34	\$18.97	\$24.25	\$29.38	\$38.70	\$41.68	\$46.01	\$47.51	
Feb.	12.83	18.18	25.65	31.12	34.33	36.30	38.91	40.86	
Mar.	16.07	21.43	25.03	29.68	34.24	38.35	40.55	42.42	
Apr.	14.68	23.60	26.30	29.88	35.42	42.73	45.08	46.78	
May	15.27	21.40	24.87	28.66	34.29	36.22	40.97	42.75	
June	15.76	21.19	23.30	27.08	32.11	33.71	36.03	38.23	
July	19.38	25.96	30.67	33.95	39.19	43.82	46.96	50.18	
Aug.	15.80	20.41	25.47	28.82	31.36	38.73	41.37	43.00	
Sept.	17.83	28.92	35.85	41.38	51.31	55.61	60.37	62.48	
Oct.	18.55	30.05	38.50	44.04	53.00	61.24	65.82	67.29	
Nov.	14.07	25.47	41.45	47.15	56.48	61.93	66.69	68.73	
Dec.	17.21	31.42	40.35	48.92	60.80	66.51	80.72	84.77	
Total	191.79	287.00	361.69	420.06	501.23	556.83	609.48	635.00	

